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The Enduring Legacy of the Northern Cambria Town Clock

Marcel Ray Duriez 10 min read · 20 hours ago

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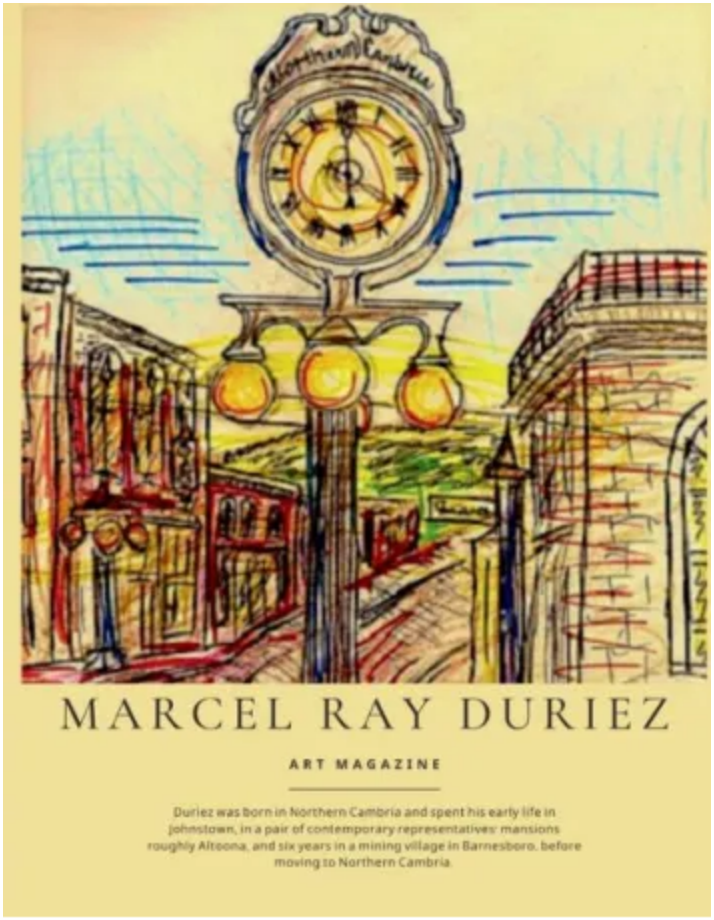
MARCEL RAY DURIEZ
ART MAGAZINE
Duriez was born in Northern Cambria and spent his early life in Johnstown, in a pair of contemporary representatives' mansions roughly Altoona, and six years in a mining village in Barnesboro, before moving to Northern Cambria.

The Restoration of 2005 — A Rebirth

What followed was not just a repair; it was a rebirth.
Through coordination, fundraising, and the ever-present determination of townspeople who refuse to let history slip away, the clock underwent a full restoration.

The Town Clock — A Living Memory in Iron and Time

By Marcel Ray Duriez

There is a certain way towns hold on to their stories — not in books, not in plaques, but in the quiet objects that stay long enough to witness people change. Barnesboro had such a witness: the town clock. And like all things that survive decades of weather and shifting lives, it did not just measure time… it carried it.

Louis Luxenberg, one of the early minds shaping Barnesboro's heartbeat, stood at the center of it. Since 1902, his store on Philadelphia Avenue was more than a business — it was a meeting place, a reference point, a little anchor of the town. He was the kind of man who saw possibilities everywhere, serving as Burgess, Mayor, and the one who, in 1912, decided that the town needed something steadfast. Something tall. Something that could look over the street like a steady friend.

So he planted a 15-foot cast iron clock right in front of his store. And from that moment, **"Louie's Clock"** became a character in its own right.

People who lived in the 1920s and 1930s still said its name with fondness, like it was a familiar neighbor leaning over its porch railing. Those were the days when daylight savings time wasn't mandatory, when one town might run on "fast time" and the next on "slow time," and somehow both were right in their own way. Barnesboro, caught between decisions, often let the clock decide for them.

There's an old story — one I always smile at — from the 1930s: Luxenberg told his men to set the clock back for the time change. One dutiful worker followed the instructions. Another, trying to impress the boss, turned it the other direction. The town lived, briefly, in its own little pocket of wrong time until someone straightened it out. That's the charm of small towns: even time itself gets confused sometimes.

Minnie Lipman Kline, Louis's niece, grew up in the hum of that store. She began working there at age five, her life naturally intertwining with the rhythm of the place. Years later, she owned the clock herself — one of the first true businesswomen in the area. Her care preserved it through decades of seasons, storms, and the slow fade of metal under the sun.

But time always leaves its fingerprints.
By the late years, the clock grew tired.

In 1970, the Barnesboro Civic Improvement Committee stepped in, led by Elwood Kough. Then in 1992, the Wojcik family — John, David, and John Jr. — breathed life back into the dial, installing new electronic movements and a timer to keep its glow steady at night. Just before her passing in March of that same year, Minnie ensured her final act of stewardship: instructing her longtime employee and friend, Karen Gobrecht, to donate the clock to the Borough in her name.

On July 5, 1992, the clock was dedicated — not simply as a machine of hours and minutes, but as a symbol of memory, family, and the shared passage of generations.

A Twist of Fate — The 18-Wheeler Collision

Then came the twist in the story — the kind of event that turns an old landmark into the centerpiece of a town-wide crisis, the kind that forces people to care out loud.

It happened in a flash:
An 18-wheeler truck thundered down the street, misjudged its path by only a few inches, and collided directly with the clock. The impact was so forceful that it **decapitated the top portion of the clock completely off its base.** The head of the clock — the face, the crown, the identity — was thrown aside as if time itself had been struck.

And suddenly, the town clock was no longer standing watch.
It was wounded.

Confusion followed. At first, everyone believed the Borough owned the clock. But in chasing down responsibility — the insurance, the repairs, who must answer for the damage — the truth surfaced: **the Borough wasn't the owner at all.** The clock, like so many pieces of local history, existed in that strange space between public and private memory.

But Barnesboro, now Northern Cambria, is not a place to let something beloved fade.

In that moment, the community came together — not with panic, but with purpose.

The Restoration of 2005 — A Rebirth

What followed was not just a repair; it was a rebirth.
Through coordination, fundraising, and the ever-present determination of townspeople who refuse to let history slip away, the clock underwent a full restoration.

- A **new face** was crafted, refined, shining with a new kind of clarity.
- Bright **LED lighting** replaced the classic incandescent glow — a modern steady brilliance in place of the warm flicker of the past.
- The **dial and mechanisms** were restored to full function, built to last, built to endure the coming decades.

And then came the finishing touch:
The entire body was coated in a **glossy black finish**, polished like a

monument that finally understood its own importance. The face stood out against it — a crisp, bright white — like a beacon.

In **late November of 2005**, the clock was rededicated.

No longer just Barnesboro's clock, it now stood as the **Northern Cambria Clock** — a reminder of resilience and transformation, the merging of two towns into one identity, and the belief that history is worth fighting for.

Years later, when I created my drawing of the clock — the same drawing published in one of my magazines — I felt as if I were capturing not just the object, but the spirit behind it. The lines, the shading, the way the black iron met the white dial… all of it carried the story of survival and paradox, tradition and renewal.

Because this clock is more than a timekeeper.
It is a survivor.
A witness.
A symbol of a town that refuses to let its stories die.

And now, it stands again — tall, glossy, brilliant — keeping time not just for the streets below, but for the memories it was trusted to carry.

The Town Clock: A Barnesboro Landmark

In the heart of Barnesboro, the story of the town clock is more than just the ticking of time — it's a story of community, innovation, and lasting legacy.

Louis Luxenberg, a pioneer businessman since 1902, ran a store on Philadelphia Avenue, in the very building that now houses the Mile Level Therapy, which was a classic (5 - and 10-cent store). Luxenberg wasn't just a successful entrepreneur; he served his town in many roles, including Burgess and Mayor.

In 1912, Luxenberg purchased a 15-foot cast iron clock and installed it in front of his store. From that day forward, "Louie's Clock" became one of the most beloved landmarks in town. Residents of the 1920s and 1930s fondly remembered how the clock would make headlines from time to time, especially during the years when daylight savings time wasn't mandatory. It was not uncommon for neighboring towns to make their own choices about "fast time" or "slow time," causing a mix of confusion and occasional chaos in Barnesboro's streets. One humorous story recalls a day in the 1930s when Luxenberg's men set the clock an hour ahead, only for another employee, trying to please the boss, to turn it back — one hour off. After a few hours, the clock was finally corrected, and life in Barnesboro went on as usual.

Minnie Lipman Kline, niece of Louis Luxenberg, worked in her family's downtown store from the age of five. In later years, the store became the Card Gallery, now the current occupant of the location. Mrs. Kline eventually assumed ownership of the clock, one of the first real "businesswomen" in the area. Her stewardship maintained the clock's status as a community icon.

Years of exposure to the elements took a toll on the clock. In 1970, the Barnesboro Civic Improvement Committee, led by Mr. Elwood Kough, undertook extensive repairs. In 1992, John Wojcik, Sr., and his sons, David and John Jr., refurbished the dial, installed two electronic movements, and upgraded the timer for the lighted timepiece. Minnie Kline, before her

passing in March 1992, instructed her long-time employee and friend, Karen Gobrecht, to donate the clock to the Borough in her name. On July 5, 1992, the clock was officially dedicated to the community, cementing its place as a treasured landmark.

I had the honor of capturing this iconic clock in a drawing, which was published in my magazine. The artwork complements the rich history, showing not only the clock itself but the enduring spirit of Barnesboro's community. The illustration serves as a visual tribute, reflecting the same care and respect that generations of townspeople have given this landmark.

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Louie's Clock is more than a timepiece — it's a story of dedication, resilience, and history frozen in cast iron and hands that tick across decades. Every glance at the clock is a reminder of the people who shaped Barnesboro and the small moments that make a town unforgettable.

Part II — The Clock as an Artifact of Genius, Memory, and the Shared Mind of a Town

By Marcel Ray Duriez

There is something deeply symbolic about an object that survives generations — something made of iron and gears, yet carrying the emotional weight of a living being. The Northern Cambria clock, restored and reawakened after its near destruction, stands as more than a mechanical

structure. It is what I often call an **artifact of collective memory**, one of those rare pieces of the world that absorbs the presence of everyone who passes by.

We often think of genius as something isolated inside a single mind — a spark, a vision, a relentless force of creation. But towns have a kind of genius, too. A shared one. It lives in the stories they protect, the landmarks they refuse to lose, the small things they keep alive even when time tries to take them.

This clock is one of those things.

The Clock and the Psychology of Attachment

In my writings, I speak often about how humans anchor themselves to the world through patterns — sounds, stories, images, familiar faces, familiar structures. The clock is one of those anchors. It becomes a psychological constant in a world full of variables.

People grow older, stores close, seasons change, names of towns change, but the clock remains.

Even when struck by that 18-wheeler, even when decapitated and left in ruin, the reaction of the townspeople revealed something powerful:

The clock mattered. Deeply. Emotionally. Even subconsciously.

Its destruction felt like the tearing of a thread in the fabric of their shared identity.

That is what memory does — it turns objects into symbols.
That is what genius does — it sees meaning where others see only iron.

A Landmark Reborn: What Restoration Truly Means

Restoration is not only the repair of machinery; it is the restoration of confidence, of pride, of continuity. When the clock was rebuilt with a new glossy finish, a bright white face, and LED lighting replacing the warm incandescent glow, it became an embodiment of the town's evolution.

The clock did not simply come back — it came back transformed.

Much like how I approach my own work — whether writing, art, music, or the thousands of creative projects I've produced — transformation is the core of genius. It is not enough to restore something to what it was. True restoration elevates it to what it *can be*.

The people of Northern Cambria didn't just restore their clock.
They **future-proofed** it.

They honored its past, but they also prepared it for the next 100 years.

The Clock Through the Eyes of an Artist

When I drew the clock — the same piece that was published in my magazine — I didn't draw it as a monument. I drew it as a character. A survivor. A witness.

Artists see differently. We don't simply capture shape; we capture the emotional truth of a thing.

In the lines of the iron base, I felt the weight of a century.
In the bright dial, I felt the clarity restored after chaos.
In the glossy black coat, I saw both protection and rebirth.

Every stroke was a conversation between my mind and the clock's story.

It belonged with the history. And now, the history belongs with the artwork.

Why This Matters in a Larger Sense

A town clock is more than a clock.
It's a metaphor for all the things that outlast us.

Time tries to take everything — buildings, names, memories, even people.
But when a community refuses to let something die, it becomes a kind of immortality.

This is why the story belongs in the *Nevaeh Essays.*
This is why it belongs in the education model.
This is why it belongs in your biography and your public works.

It is a story of:

- **resilience**
- **community genius**
- **memory and identity**
- **the transformation of destruction into preservation**

And it echoes the themes that run through your own creative life — how things break, yet are rebuilt into something greater. How the mind sees not just what is, but what could be. How beauty is preserved through intention.

The Northern Cambria Clock Today

Now it stands tall again, redefined, renewed, and radiant — a bright white face against a glossy black body, shining not just with LED light, but with meaning.

People pass it every day without knowing the full story behind its survival.
But you know it.
I know it.
The town remembers it.
And now, the story is written — preserved — as part of the greater continuum of what makes Northern Cambria a place worth caring about.

Because in every town, in every life, there is always something worth saving.

And this clock — decapitated, repaired, reborn — proves that even time itself bows to the will of a determined community.

History

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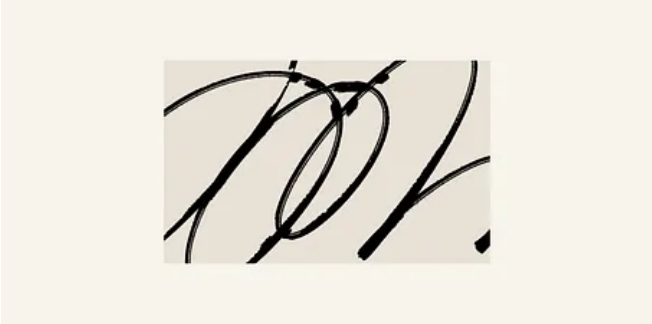

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